

# *Caravan of the Swamp King*

A One-Shot for 4 players at level 10, each with 3 uncommon or 1 rare magic item(s).

## *Premise*

Crozier<sup>1</sup>, a word that originally meant a bishop's staff, is a dizzying drug that can be drunk. It is sold at an exorbitant price by the Swamp King. The Swamp King<sup>2</sup> is not a king of any particular swamp, but rather lives in a caravan<sup>3</sup> that travels through the planes from swamp to swamp, where he sells crozier.

You have received information that his caravan will pass through a swamp in Feboria soon: The Din'el Swamp outside of Gift Hollow in the Easte Villages (or wherever works best in your own world). Your character has some motivation to steal the crozier from the Swamp King: maybe to sell it for themselves, or maybe to consume.

The woman who gave you both this information, Valeria<sup>4</sup>, has also told you that others will be in the Mossy Mead Tavern in Gift Hollow. She recommends that you work together.

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<sup>1</sup> Rollin' (Bump This, 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Slime (2019)

<sup>3</sup> Train (Bump This, 2019)

<sup>4</sup> Help Let Me Go (2019)

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## *Gift Hollow*

Gift Hollow, a town in the Easte Villages, is known for solstice festivals and the festivals' associated archfey. The square is decorated with evergreen trees and depictions of one of these archfey, an old man with a red coat and a sleigh.<sup>5</sup> The town wasn't always peaceful, but the nearby marsh has been long rid of any hags, darklings, or other creatures that prefer the squelching of the swamp.

As you approach the Mossy Mead Inn, a satyr woman stands outside and waves; you recognize her as Valeria, the person who informed you that the Caravan of the Swamp King would be coming through the nearby Din'el Swamp.

"Hey there! I've been waiting for y'all to get into town. Why don't we head into the tavern and get you two acquainted, then we can go into the Din'el Swamp - that's where the caravan will be going through in a few hours."

This is the point for the party to get familiarized with each other's characters, as well as refresh their memories on the premise of the one-shot. It's always good to include time for the party to get in character, especially at the beginning of a one-shot with characters they probably haven't played before. This is even more true if the characters are also based on the comedy songs of Danny Gonzalez or generally joke characters. If they don't know that the one-shot is based on that body of work, this might also be a good time to let them in on the joke.

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<sup>5</sup> I'm Gonna Kill Santa Claus (2018)

## *Mossy Mead Tavern*

The Mossy Mead Tavern is a bustling hub for adventurers and townsfolk alike, which is immediately apparent upon entering. There are only a few empty tables and a loud, raucous cheering occasionally bubbles up as tavern-goers raise up their mugs of sparkling, green mead. More solstice decorations have been strung up inside and it seems as though many of those at the tavern have traveled here for the coming festivities.

In the corner, there is a large board of advertisements, announcements, and quests. A well-dressed squire is putting up a sketch of a woman on the board, underneath which it says “1,000 Gold Reward for a Safe Return!”

The well dressed squire is Johnny Leget<sup>6</sup> and has been sent to look for Joyce of House Pearlhall, a runaway noble. If pressed, Johnny will reveal that Joyce was a crozier addict and absconded with her family’s fortune.

The tavern keeper is an old elf named Oronwel. He is a retired adventurer and was one of those who cleared out the swamp.

Today’s menu special is pork stew and a tankard of their sparkling<sup>7</sup> “Mossy Mead” for 1 sp.

Townsfolk include Mai, a human blacksmith, Allun, a half-elf town crier, and Newan, a halfling baker.

Once the characters are acquainted and some time has passed, Valeria will guide them to the Din’el Swamp.

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<sup>6</sup> Johnny Johnny (2018)

<sup>7</sup> La Croix (2020)

## *The Din'el Swamp*

The Din'el<sup>8</sup> Swamp itself must be harmless, after all, as adventurers had cleared out any threat a hundred years ago. That's what has allowed Gift Hollow to be the flourishing town it is. However, as you trek through the mud of the marsh, it feels less than welcoming.

Characters either make a perception check or use their passive perception (your choice) for a DC: 15 check to see four darkling thieves (Darkling Elder stat block) following them.

If they succeed the check, combat ensues. If they fail, they are ambushed and the darklings get a surprise round before combat begins.

After combat, if the party investigates the ground where one of the darklings exploded, they will find an ash-covered brass key. This can be used later to open the Puzzle Doors without the permission of the Janus Brothers.

## *The Caravan Itself*

As you continue through the swamp, there is a sudden gleam of light and the noise of horses up ahead. As it passes through a small clearing, you see a purple wagon with no driver. The horses seem to be completely fine in this marshy environment, walking at a steady pace along the surface of the swamp water. A rusty sign hangs off the side of the carriage, on which faded gilded words read: "Caravan of the Swamp King."

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<sup>8</sup> Din'el... Daniel... Danny... you get it.

## *Morgismus' Carriage*

The inside of the carriage is quite homey, with a bed in the corner and a bookshelf that holds many well-worn tomes. A man sits at a small desk, flipping through what is clearly a spell book, transcribing something into it from a scroll. He looks up at you.

“Ah, visitors! I presume you are here to meet the King? Well, he doesn't take too kindly to personal visits, but I'm sure he'll allow you to travel with us a little ways. But if you will, humor me: what brings you to our caravan?”

After a little while, Morgismus guides you to the back door of the carriage and bids you goodbye. The door opens up to a rope bridge between his carriage and the next.

## *Morgismus the Dark Mage*

Morgismus is the conductor of the caravan. He is attuned to the cursed artifact “Reigns of Plane Travel,” which binds him to the caravan - he's been here longer than the Swamp King.

He also has a crush on the Swamp King, so he's okay with being stuck here, but wants to be noticed and appreciated for his work. If the party promises to help him be noticed by the Swamp King, Morgismus will give advice on what lies ahead and thank them.

While Morgismus is kind to the party, he is not a good person. If one of the party members continually insults him, Morgismus will become enraged and begin casting a spell. This should cue the party to run into the next carriage, which they will have enough time to do. If not, Morgismus will cast the spell Fear on them.

## Lounge

As you enter a sliding, metal door, you find yourself in a warmly decorated room that is thin and long in shape. In contrast to the decor of the room itself there are 6 out-of-place figures, sitting in plush burgundy chairs, looking out the window into the sky. A algae-covered nymph and a Yuanti-Pureblood seem engrossed in conversation, a dark and menacing armored figure sits in the corner, staring out a window, and a halfling appears to be passed out, face towards the ceiling. The other two figures, dressed in neat suits, are serving afternoon tea to the nymph and yuanti.

## Passengers

Zuhetha is a Yuanti-Pureblood Druid & consort of the Swamp King. She is gossiping to Meadia about what she's discerned about the Swamp King's future plans, as he doesn't really talk to her all that much. His plans primarily include a goal of replacing Morgismus with someone less powerful, just in case of a rebellion.

Meadia is a promiscuous swamp nymph and Zuhetha's best friend. She is interjecting with the occasional valley-girl-like exclamation ("OMG, no he *didn't!*").

Clarissa, a tall woman with grayish skin and dark armor, is a revenant hitching a ride on her way to kill a powerful vampire crime lord<sup>9</sup>.

Mera is a crozier addict and halfling snake-oil salesman. She is snoring loudly.

The two attendants serving afternoon tea are Akke, a kobold, and Riakeh, a lizardfolk.

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<sup>9</sup> My Dad Is Rich (2020)

## *Dining*

This carriage is decorated even more elegantly than the last, with tables against the window with lush emerald chairs. Enjoying - or at least, mostly enjoying - dinner are four more strange folks. One of them argues with a kobold man in a butler's suit. In the back corner is a doorway from which there is a clanging. There is also a back door that seems to lead out of the carriage. Through the windows you can see over the feywild.

## *Passengers*

Winnifred Knucklebones is a crafty Green Hag who is planning to usurp the Swamp King but knows she isn't powerful enough to do so. She is arguing with Vutt about the temperature of her food. The meat was served cold, which is because she ordered it rare.

Glopjaw is a bullywug lord wearing military regalia. He sits across from Winnifred.

Enelior is an elven crozier addict and a retired bard who made his fortune adventuring a hundred years ago. He strums his lute lazily, humming a winding tune.

Jackson O'Connor isn't sure how he got here and would like to leave, but doesn't want to be rude. He sits across from Enelior and fidgets anxiously. He will only speak if addressed directly.

Vutt is the kobold head attendant who is very proper. He is wearing a butler's uniform and is chastising Winnifred for her poor manners.

Irniciz is the lizardfolk chef who is definitely cooking with humanoid meat, but keeps to himself in the kitchen.

## *Sleeping Quarters*

The sleeping quarters are made up of various separate rooms. Each door has a window, most of which have a curtain drawn over them. There are two rooms with open doors, one of which is being cleaned by a kobold maid, and the other of which you don't see anyone in. The nearest closed door, however, does not have its curtain drawn, and through the window you can see the woman from the missing poster in the tavern.

## *Passengers*

Miss Adu is a kobold maid. She is short and sweet, and likes to keep things tidy, but has her work cut out for her with the room she's cleaning, which appears to belong to Winnifred. It is covered in grime and strangely wet.

Moragne, an elder Darkling, sitting in a dark corner of the other open room. She stares quietly at those who enter and if they talk to her, she tells them to get out of her room.

Joyce of House Pearlhall is an addict and young runaway noble human who absconded with her family's fortune. She is stumbling around her room, trying to find another bottle of crozier.

## *Staff Quarters*

The next carriage, the Staff Quarters, are mostly empty. There is one cot that has a sleeping lizardfolk in it. There is a nametag on his shirt that says "Yoax."

## *The Puzzle Doors*

In this carriage, which appears to be a small library filled with bookcases and chests, there are two similar looking men standing before two similar wooden doors. They turn to you and say, in unison:

“We are the Janus Brothers<sup>10</sup>. One of us tells the truth and the other lies. One of these doors leads to certain death, and the other, to the throne or the Swamp King. This statement, of course, does not count. You have one question to ascertain which door is which.”

As the party discusses what they will ask, interrupt and ask for their passive perceptions. If someone makes a perception check or has a passive perception beating a DC: 13, they will hear muffled noises coming from one of the chests and one of the bookshelves in the room.

### *The Janus Brothers*

Both of the guards are filthy liars. There are two more brothers, gagged and hidden in the room. One is in a chest, the other, behind a bookshelf. Both doors lead to the throne room, but can only be unlocked by the Janus Brothers or with the key from the darklings from the Din’el Swamp. If the Janus Brothers are not treated well by the party, they will refuse to open the doors, but can be threatened to do so anyways.

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<sup>10</sup> Sad and Deep (2019) & I Ghosted Kevin Jonas (2022)

## *The Throne Room*

As you enter through the door, you find yourself in a much bigger room than could possibly fit in the wagon that you had just seen. Piles of treasure litter the room, which is decorated in a royal fashion but run-down and decrepit, almost decaying. Lounging on a weathered, dark throne sits a man with huge draconic wings and horns. He holds a staff, curled at the top: a crozier.

“Oh? Who dares to enter my lair? It does not matter - you must perish for this intrusion!”

Scales quickly overtake the Swamp King’s skin as he grows in size, within a moment a hulking dragon poised for battle.

## *The Swamp King*

*Huge Dragon, neutral evil*

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- **Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)
  - **Hit Points** 210
  - **Speed** 40 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.
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| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 20 (+5) | 14 (+2) | 18 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 18 (+4) |

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- **Saving Throws** Dex +6, Con +8, Wis +7, Cha +8
  - **Skills** Perception +7, Persuasion +12, Stealth +10
  - **Damage Immunities** Poison
  - **Condition Immunities** Poisoned
  - **Senses** Blindsight 60 ft., Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 17
  - **Languages** Common, Draconic, Undercommon
  - **Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)
  - **Proficiency Bonus** +4
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**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The dragon makes one Bite attack and two Claw attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Change Shape.** The dragon magically transforms into any creature that is Medium or Small, while retaining its game statistics (other than its size). This transformation ends if the dragon is reduced to 0 hit points or uses its action to end it.

**Swamp Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The dragon exhales a cloud of poison in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 49 (14d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

- **Crozier's Staff** . The dragon uses his staff to cast Poison Spray.
- **Tail.** The dragon makes one Tail attack.

- **Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions).** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.

### **Lair Action**

Upon being bloodied, on initiative count 20 (losing ties), the dragon can take this action:

- **Crozier's Wrath.** The dragon uses his staff to cast Cloudkill.

### *Loot*

There is 8000 (or some other wild amount) gp worth of gold and treasure in the throne room, a Canaith Mandolin, instrument of the bards (or 1 other rare item of your choice).

There are also 500 bottles of crozier in the next wagon, each 16 gp (total 8,000 gp).

## *Conclusion*

After the battle and looting, describe what happens to the notable people who your party interacted with on their way through the carriage. For example, if they took a particular liking to Morgismus, give him a brief happy ending. Then, allow your players to describe what they do after the events of the one-shot.

Thank you so much for reading/running this one-shot!

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